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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000964

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: KABILA LAUNCHES TRANSITION ASSESSMENT SEMINAR

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece. Reason 1.4 (b/d).

11. (U) President Kabila presided over the ceremonial opening June 10 of a Transition evaluation and assessment seminar. The Ambassador and other chiefs of mission of members countries of the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT) were also invited to attend, as were selected other senior international community representatives and senior GDRC executive and legislative branch officials. The opening was covered by the local press, although the substantive discussions will be closed. The seminar itself will involve government ministers and other senior officials.

12. (C) The idea of a general Transition assessment was included in President Kabila's May 16 national speech, which was generally viewed as the President's endorsement and kick-off to official parliamentary debate over a needed extension to the DRC's two-year old transition. The purpose of the exercise is not entirely clear. One plausible idea is that Kabila is seeking to use the seminar as a means to oblige all of the various parties participating in the Transitional Government to express their criticisms and suggestions in a coherent manner, rather than express views separately in public, and politically-driven, remarks that could contribute to further political divisiveness during a politically-tense period. In other words, Kabila is using the seminar to fence in his transition government partners.

13. (C) During a wide-ranging discussion June 11 in a private meeting with the Ambassador (septel), Vice President Ruberwa commented that Kabila also seems to be seeking to use the seminar to lay the groundwork for what Ruberwa characterized as significant changes in the government. Potentially, he said, this might include an effort by Kabila to replace Vice President Yerodia, as well as several cabinet ministers. Ruberwa commented that Kabila's apparent desire for all of the parties participating in the government to undertake similar shake-ups posed a problem for his party, RCD-Goma. Having completed several cabinet changes of RCD-Goma ministers a few months ago, and just winding up an apparently often-contentious party conference to review whether RCD-Goma officials should be maintained in their party functions, Ruberwa has no desire to undertake further changes among RCD-Goma ministers.

14. (U) The seminar is expected to be completed on Tuesday, June 14 or Wednesday, June 15. Whatever changes are expected in government operations or personnel would presumably be clear soon thereafter.

15. (C) Comment: Making changes among key PPRD ministers or other officials within a context of a broader government-wide shakeup would simplify things a bit politically for Kabila. Such an approach would be consistent with Kabila's mode of operating and sounds entirely plausible. Presumably, in addition to laying the groundwork for personnel changes, and keeping his transition partners somewhat coordinated, Kabila views the seminar as a part of the overall government effort to address popular concerns in advance of the sensitive June 30 anniversary date. In that regard, we are more skeptical that the seminar will achieve significant results. As far as specifics, there are widespread rumors that the Minister of Finance is particularly vulnerable. Kinshasa, however, is always full of often-specific rumors, and most are untrue. If significant personnel changes are coming, they will probably be sooner rather than later, i.e. before June 30. End comment.

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